

My name is Arka Mikel, a Social worker at the Willimantic Housing Authority in Willimantic, the largest low income housing provider in Windham County. I appreciate the opportunity to submit my testimony concerning H.B. No. 6824- An Act Concerning the State Budget for Biennium ending June Thirtieth 2017, and making Appropriations Thereafter and other Provisions Related to Revenue. It is imperative that the funding for the CT AHEC Network be restored (\$456K). For more than five years, Eastern AHEC has been able to provide culturally competent care with quality and meaningful educational programs for our elderly/non-elderly with disabilities and young parents with children in low income housing, many of whom are marginalized with limited means to access such service.

I and all the residents at the Willimantic Housing Authority have never been part of a program that has continually helped us grow both professionally and educationally. We kindly request that you restore the funding so that we could continue to have access to the many great services provided by AHEC in Eastern Connecticut, specifically in Windham County.

Thank you for your support,

Arka Mikel, MSW